

Message Text

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65/66

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 PM-04 NSC-05 SS-15 (ISO) W

----- 063744

R 291340Z SEP 75

FM AMCONSUL BREMEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1778

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y: CHANGE IN TEXT FIRST TWO LINES
PARA 4.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: BREMEN LAND ELECTION OUTCOME

REF: BREMEN 0487

1. SUMMARY: BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

IN THE SEPTEMBER 28 BREMEN LAND ELECTIONS, THE SPD, AS EXPECTED, RETAINED ITS ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE BUERGERSCHAFT (52 OF 100 SEATS). HOWEVER, IT SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES AND DROPPED FROM 55.3 PERCENT (IN THE 1971 LAND ELECTION) TO 48.7 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. THE CDU INCREASED ITS VOTE FROM 31.6 PERCENT TO 33.8 PERCENT. THE FDP EMERGED AS THE WINNER, INCREASING ITS PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE FROM 7.1 PERCENT TO 12.9 PERCENT. THE DKP DROPPED FROM 3.1 PERCENT TO 2.1 PERCENT; THE NPD FROM 2.8 PERCENT TO 1.1 PERCENT. OTHER SPLINTER PARTIES COMBINED

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DID NOT RECEIVE EVEN ONE PERCENT OF THE VOTE. VOTER

PARTICIPATION (80.2 PERCENT), CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS OF A DECREASE, WAS 0.2 PERCENT HIGHER THAN IN 1971.

2. THE SPD WON AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF 52 SEATS IN THE NEW BUERGERSCHAFT, A LOSS OF 7 SEATS. BUERGERMEISTER HANS KOSCHNICK IN HIS FIRST POST-ELECTION STATEMENT DECLARED THAT THE FORMATION OF AN SPD/FDP COALITION WAS UNLIKELY SINCE THE ABSOLUTE SPD MAJORITY IN THE BREMEN CITY (ONE VOTE MAJORITY) AND THE LAND (TWO VOTE MAJORITY) PARLIAMENTS PERMITTED THE SPD TO GOVERN ALONE. KOSCHNICK ADDED THAT THE VOTER SHIFT FROM THE SPD TO THE FDP SHOWED THAT NATIONAL ISSUES, SSPECIALY THE GOVERNMENT'S SCONOMIC AND FINANCIAL POLICIES, WERE NOT THE REASON FOR SPD LOSSES IN BREMEN. RATHER VARIOUS LOCAL ISSUES WERE RESPON-SIBLE.

3. THE CDU WILL HAVE 35 SEATS IN THE NEW BUERGERSCHAFT, AN INCREASE OF ONE. BERND NEUMANN, CDU LAND CHAIRMAN, EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE "BEST RESULT EVER OBTAINED BY THE CDU IN BREMEN", BUT ADMITTED THAT HE AND OTHER LEADERS OF THE PARTY HAD HOPED FOR ABOUT TWO PERCENT MORE.

4. THE FDP ALMOST DOUBLED ITS SHARE OF SEATS IN THE BUERGER-SCHAFT (FROM SEVEN TO THIRTEEN). ITS CHAIRMAN, HORST-JUERGEN LAHMANN, CONSIDERED BY NEARLY EVERYONE THE BIG WINNER IN THE ELECTION, ATTRIBUTED THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE THE FDP HAS OBTAINED SINCE 1947 TO THE FACT THAT THE FDP HAS DEVELOPED A CLEAR ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM AND THEREFORE A SEPARATE POLITICAL IDENTITY. HE STATED THAT HIS PARTY WOULD NOT FORM A COALITION WITH THE SPD SINCE THE LATTER HAD RETAINED ITS ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. COMMENT: BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

AS PREDICTED IN REFTTEL, THE SPD RETAINED ITS ABSOLUTE MAJORITY AND WILL GOVERN ALONE. ALTHOUGH PD LOSSES AND FDP GAINS WERE EXPECTED, MOST OBSERVERS WERE SURPRISED AT THE MAGNITUDE. KOSCHNICK CANNOT BE HAPPY ABOUT A 6.6 PERCENT LOSS IN SPD STRENGTH, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE NOVEMBER SPD NATIONAL CONVENTION WHERE HE EXPECTS TO BE ELECTED DEPUTY SPD FEDERAL CHAIRMAN. A COMPENSATION WILL BE HIS ABILITY TO USE THE ELECTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RESULTS AS AMMUNITION IN INTRAPARTY DISPUTES WITH HIS PARTY'S LEFT WING IN BREMEN. LOOKING TOWARDS THE NATIONAL SPD CONVENTION, KOSCHNICK COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO ATTRIBUTE THE LOSSES TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES, THUS HIS EMPHASIS ON "LOCAL ISSUES". IN FACT, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION PROBABLY DID PLAY A KEY ROLE IN SPD LOSSES (SINCE IT IS THE MAJOR PARTNER IN THE FEDERAL COALITION) AS DID LOCAL ISSUES, ESPECIALLY THE RECENT TAPE RECORDING SCANDAL. THE FDP TOOK VOTES FROM

THE SPD AND SOME WHICH, HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE SCANDAL,
WOULD HAVE GONE TO THE CDU. LAHMANN HAS CLEARLY EMERGED AS
A RISING STAR IN LAND POLITICS. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

6. DETAILED COMMENTS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.WESTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BREMEN00494
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750339-0646
From: BREMEN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975097/aaaaafht.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BREMEN 487
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <03 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BREMEN LAND ELECTION OUTCOME
TAGS: PINT, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006